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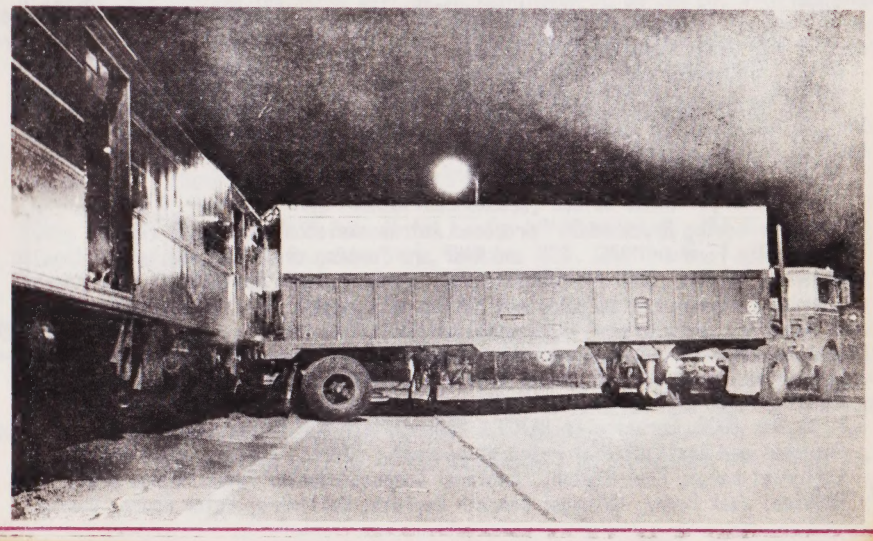
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 8 NO. 8
SECOND ISSUE OF
MAY 1978
#174



LETTERS

Your review of the DOT route proposal and accompanying editorial comment were accurate and timely (last issue). Figures contained in an ICC "Report on Amtrak" released in March refute the claim that route proliferation has been responsible for Amtrak's increasing deficits. Rather, it appears that Amtrak's acquisition of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and top-heavy payroll have been two of the real culprits.

DOT's anti-West, anti-anything-but-the-NEC bias is evident in DOT's refusal to consider the tourist potential of rail routes. Mr. Joseph Lyons (Letters, last issue) is understandably happy that the San Joaquin Valley would be linked to the outside world. Meanwhile, we in Southern Arizona get daily service to New Orleans (under the DOT proposal) when what we really need is service to the Midwest.

The passenger mile/train mile potential of Chicago-Los Angeles service via Tucson and Phoenix was not even considered by DOT. I hope other RTN readers join me in "Rationalizing the Amtrak System" by, among other things, rejecting Mr. Lyons' suggestion that we endorse the DOT/Adams plan.

Rob Bohannan
Tucson, Arizona

The DOT's recently-issued "Two-Year Report on the Northeast Corridor" contains a statement having major implications for the Amtrak national system:

"Demand is sensitive to rail fares, with the relative impact much greater on passengers than on revenue. For example, a 10 to 15% increase in fares increases revenue by only 2 to 3%, whereas demand drops between 6 and 11%."

This statement is especially striking in view of the fact that one half of NEC rail travel is business travel (67% on Metroliners, 44% on Amfleet trains). One might thus expect travel on the remainder of Amtrak's system to be even more price-sensitive. Implications of the above data include:

(1) DOT Secretary Brock Adams' quoted statement that "I think fares are going to have to go up in any event" make when he announced DOT's proposal to cut back the Amtrak system, does not provide a proposal to solve Amtrak's financial problems by generating higher revenues. The demand/price elasticities cited above show that higher fares would raise minimal revenues while cutting Amtrak usage, thus serving as a prelude to service abandonments.

(2) The above data explain why NEC rail patronage has remained flat in 1976-1977: as service was improved (new Amfleet cars substituted for old cars), fares were simultaneously increased sharply, with the "conventional" NY-Washington fare rising from $14 in Feb 1976 to $20.50 in Jul 1977, an increase of 46% within 18 months. It is a surprise that NEC ridership has not gone down under the impact of the sharp fare increases of the last two years. The State of California is amply justified in trying to prevent a similar escalation of fares on the San Diego-Los Angeles route.

Christopher Wasiutynski
New York, New York

After seeing Brock Adams' proposed Amtrak skeleton, I have no regrets about voting for Ford in 1976. RTN and NARP are "eating crow" for urging railfans to vote for Carter. Without adequate rail service within the U.S.A., "Mr. Peanut" and the Congress can forget about having this nation fighting any major war.

When the Secretary of Transportation advocates combining the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, which often runs at the 18-car maximum limit, with 2 other trains, I know that extension of NEC rail service north of South Station is still a long way off.

Because most Republicans advocate better rail service, that's the way I usually vote.

Robert A. Brown
Newbury, Massachusetts

(Ed. note: RTN made no recommendations in the 1976 election. We were still considering a write-in vote as we entered the voting booth. If you had the opportunity to read as much rail correspondence as we do, you would quickly discover that no political party has a monopoly on preferring improved rail service. The fact is that support for rail travel cuts across any classification of people that you can name: age, sex, race, political preference, etc., etc. That's why there is such strong backing for rail travel in this country, especially among those who have experienced its pleasures.)

Rail Travel News, Vol. 8, No. 8 (Whole No. 174). Second Issue of May, 1978.
Copyright © 1978 by Message Media.
Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $10.50 per year; single copy 45¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Corresoondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

ON THE COVER

(Top:) A transit train prepares to leave the Belvedere Station of the new LRT system in Edmonton, Canada, in the first weeks of operation. Last issue we presented an article on the system's opening, and now we bring you Tom Schwarzkopf's story of riding the new rapid transit system, starting on page 17. Photo by the author.

(Bottom:) One of the most important statements about the DOT's new proposed plan for the Amtrak system is the letter that California Dept. of Transportation's director, Adriana Gianturco, wrote to the DOT shortly after publication of the plan (see page 9). One of her most revealing statements concerns the government's role in killing off passenger trains in the 1960's by removing mail contracts from them. Still very little mail is hauled by train. Here the northbound COAST STARLIGHT is loaded from a Postal Service truck in a nighttime scene at Oakland early this spring. Photo by Message Media.

ICC HEARINGS SET ON DOT PLAN FOR AMTRAK

The Interstate Commerce Commission has scheduled hearings beginning Jun 26 on the DOT's proposed revision of the Amtrak route system. The early date was a late change from previously-announced dates--hearings were to begin on Jun 27 in 7 cities, but instead the first will be in Washington DC on Jun 26, with hearings following on Jun 27 in Martinsburg, Richmond, Atlanta, Montgomery, Louisville and Lincoln, Nebraska. (The National Association of RR Passengers asked RTN to point out that its latest newsletter went to press just before the change in date of the Washington DC hearing.) The first hearing is expected to be opened by ICC head Dan O'Neal himself. The next date for hearings after Jun 27 is Jun 29, with hearings in New York, Parkersburg WV, Jacksonville FL, Nashville, McCook NE, and New Orleans. These are followed by Jul 6 hearings in Boise (City Hall, 150 N. Capitol Blvd.), Portland (103 Pioneer Courthouse, 555 SW Yamhill), and Denver (City Council Chambers, 1437 Bannock St.). On Jul 10 hearings will be in Butte (Council Chambers, 24 E. Broadway St.), Spokane (U.S. Courthouse, W. 920 Riverside), Reno (Auditorium, County Admin. Bldg., 1205 Mill St.), and Salt Lake City (Room 300, City & County Bldg.). On Jul 12 they will be in Havre MT (Council Chambers, City Hall, 520 4th St.), Seattle (Room 2866 Federal Bldg., 915 2nd Ave.), Sacramento (Auditorium, 1st Floor, 630 I St. at 7th), and Cheyenne (Basement Auditorium, Hathaway Bldg., 2300 Capitol Ave.). On Jul 14 Los Angeles will have hearings in Room 1122, Cal. State Off. Bldg., 107 S. Broadway. Hearings in Pendleton OR are also tentatively scheduled for Jul 14. Hearings in Bluefield WV will be on Jun 30. All hearings will be in two sessions--from 9:30am-5pm and 7-11pm ex-

cept for the first in Washington which start at 9:30 & 7:30. The ICC has set up an Office of Rail Public Counsel to help citizens in preparing their presentation to the ICC. The office is at 1030 15th St. NW, Washington DC 20005, phone 202-632-5233 or Ruben Robertson at 202-254-7803. The ICC's Rail Service Program Office, which is holding the hearings, can be reached at 202-254-6550. Citizens wishing to make presentations at hearings should call the ICC in advance, either at the Washington office or at a local office (for Montgomery, call Birmingham; for McCook, call Omaha; for Bluefield, call Charleston). If unable to attend, send written comments to: RSPO, Attention Ex Parte #351, 1900 L St. NW, Washington DC 20036.

AMTRAK MARKETING VP PRAISES DOT PLAN

In a move evidently not designed to win him friends among rail supporters, Amtrak Marketing Vice President Alfred A. Michaud has praised the DOT's proposed plan to reduce the Amtrak system by 8100 miles. Michaud told Travel Management Daily (May 30) that the plan was "the best planning platform for Amtrak that I've ever seen." He said that the plan is a step towards "concentrating our market (by) pulling in some of the weaker fringes." He noted that the plan, if put into effect, would allow Amtrak to "do a more concentrated marketing and advertising job." The marketing chief spoke before Amtrak's Board of Directors took an official position on the plan. The official Amtrak stance is expected to become known after the next Board meeting, on Jun 28. At the May 31 meeting, Paul Reistrup introduced Mr. Joe Swanson, a consultant who is helping Amtrak analyze the plan. Swanson is from Northwestern University. No other discussion of the plan was reported at that meeting.

AMTRAK CANCELS SLEEPING CAR SURCHARGES

Amtrak's Board of Directors at the May 31 meeting decided to "rescind immediately" the sleeping car surcharges--ranging from $10 to $40--that were to go into effect Jun 15 and continue until Sep 5. Amtrak said it will refund the extra charge to passengers who bought their tickets in advance. While Amtrak cancelled the sleeping car charges, it did not alter a 2½% across-the-board fare increase which took effect Apr 30 and did not change a Jun 15-Sep 5 surcharge on the basic fare. This increase, which ranges from $1 to $5, will be paid by both coach and first class passengers. Cancellation of the surcharges came following a criticism by Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco (see p. 10) who said she felt they would "dry up the sleeper traffic".

MONTREALER & COMMUTER TRAIN COLLIDE

A four-car Conrail commuter train of Jersey Arrow cars struck the rear of Amtrak's northbound MONTREALER at 6:25pm on Jun 9 about one mile north of the Beltway Station in Maryland. The MONTREALER was traveling at 5mph, experiencing trouble with its traction motors, when the commuter train rammed it from behind. The last 8 cars of the MONTREALER and 3 of the 4 commuter cars derailed. There were about 250 passengers on the commuter train and about 200 on the Amtrak train. Sixty-six persons were taken to hospitals and all but one released with minor injuries. The wreck blocked one of the three tracks, but necessitated turning off power on the line, tying the Corridor up until 9:30 or 10pm. Amtrak ran shuttle buses around the accident scene. A Conrail conductor was said to have commented on the scene that the brakes of the train could not stop it. The MONTREALER was carrying 14 cars.

RAIL CANADA

AMIDST WIDESPREAD CONFUSION on the part of ticket agents and the traveling public, CN on May 29 began selling tickets for travel for Jun 15 and later at new VIA fares. However, CP Rail is apparently still not an official part of VIA and continues to charge its present fares; in fact, a notice on the title page of the VIA tariff cautions that it applies on CN lines only. Adding to the confusion is the postponement of schedule changes due Jun 1, possibly until Aug 15. The Western timetable dated 4/30 thru 5/31 remains in effect.

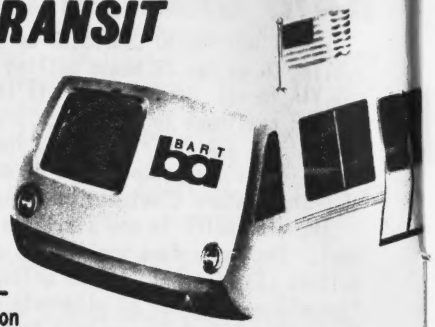
THE VIA TARIFF is now available, and fares are about as predicted (see last issue). The basic fare applies all day, every day, and is always quoted in even dollars ($3 minimum), allows unlimited stopovers, and is valid (or will be when CP "joins") on a number of alternate routings, such as Vancouver-Winnipeg via either CN or CP. Kids 5-11 pay half fare. Senior citizens are allowed 1/3 off if the one-way fare is $5 or more (except Dec 18 thru Jan 4). (Previously, CN allowed discounts of 20% Red, 15% White, 10% Blue with no restrictions on days; CP has no senior citizen discount.) While there is no family plan, two or more adults, or the equivalent, can take advantage of the group fare under which the first adult pays full fare. If 2-6 adults are traveling, each after the first gets a 25% reduction; if the group is of 7-29 adults, all after the first save 1/3; if more than 29, the saving is 40%. Members of a group do not even have to know each other. Kids 5-11 pay half the adult rate, and there are no date restrictions, altho no stopovers are allowed, except at Jasper and Banff. There are 3-day roundtrip excursions, valid up to about 700 miles, available year-round except Fridays and at Christmas. For longer distances, CN's current 7-30 day excursion will be available, with the same restrictions as the 3-day plan (and not good for departures Jun 15-Sep 15). Roundtrip excursion fares are 1 1/3 times the one-way fare, and no stopovers are allowed. Where discounts come out in fractions of a dollar (even 99¢) they are always rounded down. There are no discounts from sleeping car accommodation charges, which are added to the basic rail fare. An unexpected change is a section rate, about 20% cheaper than cost of an upper and lower berth purchased separately. The VIA tariff does not make CN's distinction between bedrooms and "mini-bedrooms".

"SUPER ECONOMO TOURS" were introduced this spring by VIA. A 24-page colour brochure describing them was published. The term "Super Economo" was first used by RTN contributor Glenn Lee in 1968 describing bus travel in Northern California as "Super Cheapo-Super Economo".

TRANSPORT CANADA HAS "conceded" says the Wall Street Journal, that the Mirabel Airport near Montreal is a "white elephant". An ad campaign for the airport pictures a cartoon white elephant.

MEMBERS OF TRANSPORT 2000 Ottawa called upon Mr. William P. Clappin at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa on Jun 7 to protest proposed Amtrak service reductions between the U.S. and Canada. Mr. Clappin reportedly received the group very well, and proved to be a close acquaintance of Amtrak President Alan S. Boyd. A service schedule of the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and predecessors from Jul 17, 1919 to present shows that running time steadily improved up to its May 1, 1971 discontinuance, and worsened under Amtrak (best time 227 minutes, present time 275 minutes). Transport 2000 "fully supported" RTN's editorial view of the cuts (last issue, p.7). The group also called for inclusion of Chicago-Winnipeg and Toronto-Chicago runs.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT



THE PASSAGE OF the controversial Jarvis-Gann Initiative by California voters on Jun by a 2-to-1 margin threatens to affect severely the funding of public transportation systems, among other tax-supported facilities. The bill is to take effect Jul 1, and cuts property tax collections statewide by about 60%. Politicians and administrators are rushing to make adjustments before the effective date. BART said it must cut $5 million from its $91.6 million budget, proposing to drop 150-200 employees. The San Francisco Muni proposes a peak-hour fare increase from the present 25¢ to 45¢, along with service reductions. AC Transit and Golden Gate Transit will be similarly affected. A state surplus of several billion dollars is to be divided up among affected agencies, including school districts, and officials are in a panic to make plans within the next two weeks.

SAN DIEGO OFFICIALS are to decide by Jul 10 whether to go ahead with a light rail transit system between San Diego and San Ysidro, using the San Diego & Arizona Eastern tracks that SP wants to dispose of. Cost of purchasing the line would be at least $60, while a system built from scratch would run over $400 million, according to Metropolitan Transit Development Board estimates.

COUNTY OF MORRIS, New Jersey (northwest of Newark) has available color-coded guides to public transportation. Contact the Board of Public Transportation, County of Morris, Courthouse, Morristown NJ 07960.

AMTRAK IS LEASING up to 40 Jersey Arrow self-propelled electric rail cars from New Jersey and will sub-lease some of them to Maryland DOT. The cars will free 16 Amfleet cars for use on the NIAGARA RAINBOW, replacing 24 conventional cars, and make another 14 Amfleet cars available for service on NY-Harrisburg and NY-Washington trains. The Amtrak Board approved the deal Apr 26, and will use the cars until at least 1980. The cars are about 4 years old, and have been used in New Jersey commuter service.

PROVISIONS FOR HANDICAPPED persons on public transportation must be phased in over the next few years, the DOT announced Jun 8. A hearing will be held in Washington Jul 26 (DOT, room 2230) on the topic. Recommended regulation would require one car accessible to handicapped on intercity trains within 3 years, and within 5 years for commuter and rapid rail systems.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Freeways are just a bummer. I decided my mental health couldn't take it."

"Californians are used to driving distances. We're car-oriented because of suburban living, which is the California image. Driving used to be a pleasant experience, but now it's self-persecution."

--SAN DIEGAN riders quoted in New York Times, Jun 1.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Amtrak drops sandwiches over packing."

--News caption in San Francisco Examiner, Jun 4.

(Gives 'em that unique Am-flavor.")

NOTES ON DOT'S PLAN FOR AMTRAK ROUTES

Amtrak has not yet taken an official position on the DOT zero-base plan (see last issue for summary of plan). An official statement is expected after the Jun 28 Amtrak Board meeting.

RTN contributors who have privately analyzed the plan have found some methodological problems in it that tend to invalidate or modify its conclusions. For example, in some of the five scenarios put forth there seems to be no recognition that connectivity in a system will generate additional ridership on the connecting routes. An isolated short-distance route in one scenario is assumed to have the same ridership that it would have if the route is connected to another long-distance route. This bias in the DOT's figures tends to make the short-distance routes look relatively better than long-distance ones. Long-distance ridership is systematically underestimated also by the use of Amtrak's Matrix System of counting riders: riders connecting from one route to another are counted twice, once on each route, for two short-distance trips that actually should add up to one long-distance trip for the rider so traveling. For example, if you traveled from Boise ID to Bakersfield CA using the PIONEER, SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and SAN JOAQUIN you would be counted as one relatively short distance rider on each of the three trains, even tho you had made a long rail trip. This bias in favor of short trips exists in Amtrak's method of counting, and the DOT simply used it, apparently without question.

One place where the study used optimistically-low figures to make Amtrak financial performance look better is in the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The DOT study projects the NEC operating deficit as decreasing thru 1984, while Amtrak's own projections on costs are "significantly more pessimistic", as we are told in a footnote. However, the study made no attempt to consider the possible veracity of Amtrak's projections.

The route plan that was selected purports to have Denver served by east and west connections. However, travel eastward to Denver is effectively ruled out by the scheduling problems that would arise on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED route shown with its spur to Denver. Travel westward from Denver would be similarly impractical except for the devoted railfan.

In scenario E (see last issue) it seems that instead of adding highly desirable routes in the Midwest, Southeast, etc., Western routes have proliferated in areas of low population to make the plan seem deliberately too liberal. The FLORIDIAN does not appear until the rejected scenario E, for example.

DOT BUDGET 1977-78
(millions of dollars)

GROUND	
Highway Construction and Safety	6,251
Mass Transit	2,146
Amtrak	576
Other Railroad	1,085
Regulation	61
	10,119
AIR	
Airways & Airports	2,417
Air Carrier Subsidies	77
Research & Technology	349
	2,843
WATER	
Coast Guard	1,203
Shipping	682
	1,885
OTHER	83
DOT TOTAL	$14,930

Here's a handy summary of the last DOT budget to clip and keep in your wallet or purse. Reader William Filer suggested this; he carries one around "at all times to be ready to answer any criticism I hear about the Amtrak federal subsidy."

THE NEW TRAIN TO ALLENTOWN
by John R. Pawson

The short but important extension of Conrail Reading Division passenger service from Bethlehem to Allentown PA began with a demonstration run of the Budd Company's SPV-2000 on May 30. The new Budd diesel car made a single round trip from Reading Terminal, Philadelphia, leaving at 9:17am and carrying a few Budd, PennDOT, SEPTA and Amtrak officials plus some passengers, including NARP associate director Joe Zuckert. There was no advance publicity in Philadelphia.

When the train reached Bethlehem the car filled to capacity with local officials and sightseers. It arrived at Allentown at 11:21am. The station platform of the long-since demolished Lehigh Valley station just east of the city center was used for a terminal facility. A large area off Third and Union Streets had been cleared and cindered as a parking lot.

The return trip left Allentown at 3:43pm for Philadelphia. The SVP-2000 was due to be taken to Washington the next day on Amtrak for forwarding to Chicago on the CARDINAL, where it will be tested in suburban service.

Regular service was to begin on Monday, June 5 as a single round trip leaving Allentown on weekdays at 6:15am and Reading Terminal at 5:05pm as extensions of trains 306 and 325 respectively. Service would reach four weekday round trips (schedules yet unwritten) on July 5. It is believed that 250 passengers a week will be needed to sustain the service.

Many Allentown people have advocated the service extension for years as a practical alternative to more grandiose schemes. Allentown--rather than the present terminus, Bethlehem--is the business center of lower Lehigh River Valley. It is the largest city in the East without rail passenger service. The last services to New York and Philadelphia ended in the 1960's.

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers worked for an early startup. PennDOT exerted pressure on Conrail to come to terms on the extension, but CR was reluctant, probably because contracts on existing service are still only in the discussion stage. When Congressman Fred B. Rooney became an ally, the way was cleared. CR needs $1.3 billion in aid from the federal government, and the Congressman chairs one of the subcommittees that is concerned in the aid bill's passage.

FINAL COMMENT ON THE SPV-2000
by Peter Roehm

The SPV-2000 is gone--banned in Boston--or so it almost seemed, given the lack of attention shown it. The car left Boston under cloak of darkness on May 17 on train 67, the HILLTOPPER, bound for a transportation Exhibit at Lindenwold NJ. After the inaugural day (see First April RTN) there was never any mention of the car anywhere. One Saturday it was to run one turn each to Stoughton, Franklin, and Readville, but the day before it got called in for routine maintenance. On a Sunday it was sent to run a special shuttle between Stoughton and Canton Junction to dedicate the refurbished Stoughton station (handled 500 riders), and on its return to Boston was wiped out at Hyde Park by a stack of vandal-placed ties between the rails. Three days later it was running out of North Station, but no one knew it. I caught it by accident later that week when I happened to go to Manchester to catch the 10am departure, which is the return leg of the 8:30 departure from Boston that cuts back at Harbor Station on the Rockport line, and--surprise!--it was the SPV.

The SPV took the Gloucester branch in its stride altho the uneven track seemed to be accentuated, as is not the case with the ageless RDCs that are finally showing their age at an accelerated rate. The inside engine

(continued on page 22)

CALTRANS ANSWERS THE DOT*

The "zero-based" Amtrak route study issued by the Federal DOT has proposed major cutbacks in passenger train service in the West, while leaving service in the Northeast basically intact.

The most immediate impact of the Federal report on California is the recommendation that the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR be eliminated and that Northern California and Colorado be served via stub connections to the SOUTHWEST LIMITED. It seems incomprehensible to us that the U.S. DOT recommends discontinuance of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. The ZEPHYR has better ridership --127 passenger miles per train mile--than 13 routes which the U.S. DOT has recommended keeping in the system.

We question the merits of eliminating trains which have strong ridership, and we have very grave doubts that what U.S. DOT proposes is at all reasonable. Just to carry current levels of ridership between Chicago, Colorado and California, one train would require 25 cars during the winter and 35 cars during the summer.

Currently, for safety reasons no trains consist of more than 18 cars. Assuming a safe service, then, the U.S. DOT proposal would have the effect of forcing Amtrak to turn away 40% to 50% of its customers in the Chicago/West Coast corridor.

Caltrans repeatedly requested that we be allowed to actively participate in the U.S. DOT study at least to the extent of reviewing and reacting to the proposals prior to the establishment of a recommendation. Our requests were not even officially acknowledged. And frankly, we feel that many of the conclusions in the study have been flawed by this lack of state participation.

The study, for instance, has not considered the revenue that could be generated by hauling bulk mail on Amtrak trains. We believe that the existing system could easily generate $50 million annually in mail revenue, and a very slight expansion could accommodate another $40 million. None of these projections has been included in any of the study's cost scenarios.

Secondly, the study has not considered the effects of a comprehensive marketing program on ridership. In California, we have done a great deal in the areas of station location, station improvements, on-board service improvements, signing, and of course, price promotions and advertising; and we believe that all of these have an enormous impact on ridership. The U.S. DOT study has not dealt with fare setting practices and has not taken any of these other techniques into serious consideration, and we believe that their analysis consequently is very seriously flawed.

We are also concerned that the Federal government has recommended that the Los Angeles-San Diego trains which the state has added be incorporated into the Amtrak basic system. We appreciate the U.S. DOT's interest and support of that service, but we are frankly concerned that if we were to relinquish any more control over the marketing of the SAN DIEGANS to a federal agency, the success we have seen on that route could evaporate. In fact, the DOT study is based on only having 5 trains per day each way rather than the 6 presently serving the corridor.

We are currently riding on a very considerable success in that corridor. Since the start of our participation in the service, ridership was increased from 390,000 to 725,000--almost doubled. And we are currently in the midst of a very large ridership expansion as a result of new marketing programs instituted by Amtrak at our insistence.

*The complete text of a letter by Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco to DOT Secretary Brock Adams.

As a result of our latest program, which features airline-type discounts of up to 45% Monday thru Wednesday and 20% Thursday and Friday, ridership in the first week of May jumped by 38% over last year.

But our results are even more dramatic than that statistic indicates. Ridership for the Monday thru Wednesday period jumped by 102.9%, and on Thursday and Friday by 43.8%. It is extremely important that these weekday trains increase their ridership, since those are the ones that contribute most heavily to Amtrak's losses on the route.

We are supporting these programs with advertising paid for with 100% state dollars, and we believe that even more dramatic increases are on the way as the vacation season arrives.

Further, because we believe that lower fares and a wider customer base will provide an economically healthy service, we have pushed Amtrak to lower its basic fares. Today, I can tell you that we have reached agreement with Amtrak in lowering the basic San Diego-Los Angeles fare from $9.25 to $8.80, and we also have their assurance that they will keep the excursion 20% discount. We are also hopeful that we can establish such programs as a multi-ride ticket good any day of the week so that daily queueing for ticket buying will not be necessary; special discounts for low-patronage trains, and incentives to persons already on the trains to both come back again and to spread the word on their pleasurable experience.

We are opposed to large fare increases and we believe that they drive people off the trains, that they hurt, not help train economics. The $20 and nightly surcharges for sleeper service that Amtrak has proposed to take effect June 15 on long distance trains serving California, we feel, will dry up the sleeper traffic.

We believe that passenger trains are essential if we are to conserve petroleum and minimize the necessity for further costly freeway construction, but they can only be a decent alternative if we have enough of them to ride.

To provide that alternative, we feel that the U.S. DOT's "full system" Scenario E, is the only one that can provide a useable system for the public, use existing Amtrak facilities efficiently, and result in lower subsidy per passenger. We realize that this would require additional funding, but even spending 3/4 of 1 billion dollars annually on passenger train service would be small potatoes, compared to subsidies of other modes. Amtrak now costs the taxpayer $500 million a year while highways cost the taxpayers over $23 billion a year.

The current subsidy of the U.S. air traffic control system is $1.8 billion annually, and this represents only a small fraction of public subsidies of airlines. Former Transportation Secretary William Coleman estimated that air travelers pay only 1/3 the cost of their transportation. Amtrak passengers, by comparison, pay almost 40%. The subsidy of U.S. highways by non-highway revenue sources since 1920 totals well over $150 billion, and this does not take into account the social and environmental damages, or the $46 billion we spend annually to import petroleum from the OPEC nations.

Until the mid-1960's the U.S. government saw fit to support rail passenger service with the same types of hidden subsidies which now benefit buses, automobiles, and airplanes. The U.S. Post Office paid the railroads over $700 million (1977 dollars) per year until 1965 to haul mail on passenger trains. The train system came tumbling down because the U.S. removed its subsidies, not because train riders became "vanishing Americans."

If the U.S. were to remove its subsidies to the airlines, a roundtrip ticket to the East Coast would cost over $1,000--and very quickly the airplane would be threatened as a means of travel. The fact that U.S. DOT has singled the passenger train out--and pointed out its subsidies--shows a complete lack of perspective on transportation costs. The money saved by proposed cuts in

 (continued on page 15)

Rate The Trains

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RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

.....

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Can we use your name? _____

TRAIN NAME & NUMBER	DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Non-food Crew	C Food Crew	D Food Quality	E Car Condition	F Routing	G Stations	H Track	I Scheduling	J Promotion	K Type of Cars	COMMENT SYMBOL*
													1
													2
													3
													4
													5
													6

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But our results are even more dramatic than that statistic indicates. Ridership for the Monday thru Wednesday period jumped by 102.9%, and on Thursday and Friday by 43.8%. It is extremely important that these weekday trains increase their ridership, since those are the ones that contribute most heavily to Amtrak's losses on the route.

We are supporting these programs with advertising paid for with 100% state dollars, and we believe that even more dramatic increases are on the way as the vacation season arrives.

Further, because we believe that lower fares and a wider customer base will provide an economically healthy service, we have pushed Amtrak to lower its basic fares. Today, I can tell you that we have reached agreement with Amtrak in lowering the basic San Diego-Los Angeles fare from $9.25 to $8.80, and we also have their assurance that they will keep the excursion 20% discount. We are also hopeful that we can establish such programs as a multi-ride ticket good any day of the week so that daily queueing for ticket buying will not be necessary; special discounts for low-patronage trains, and incentives to persons already on the trains to both come back again and to spread the word on their pleasurable experience.

We are opposed to large fare increases and we believe that they drive people off the trains, that they hurt, not help train economics. The $20 and nightly surcharges for sleeper service that Amtrak has proposed to take effect June 15 on long distance trains serving California, we feel, will dry up the sleeper traffic.

We believe that passenger trains are essential if we are to conserve petroleum and minimize the necessity for further costly freeway construction, but they can only be a decent alternative if we have enough of them to ride.

To provide that alternative, we feel that the U.S. DOT's "full system" Scenario E, is the only one that can provide a useable system for the public, use existing Amtrak facilities efficiently, and result in lower subsidy per passenger. We realize that this would require additional funding, but even spending 3/4 of 1 billion dollars annually on passenger train service would be small potatoes, compared to subsidies of other modes. Amtrak now costs the taxpayer $500 million a year while highways cost the taxpayers over $23 billion a year.

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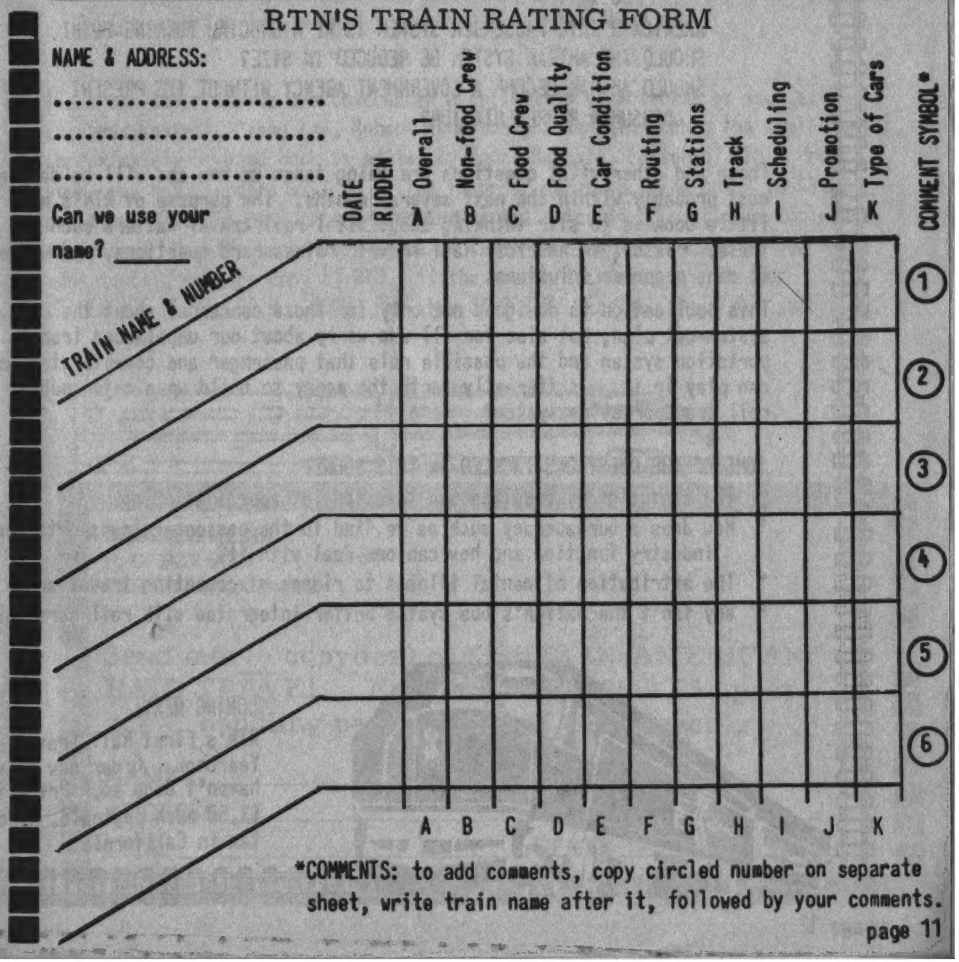

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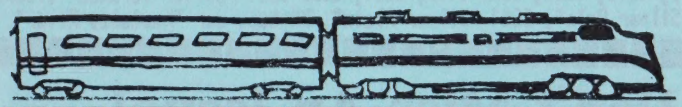

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Zephyrs, Chiefs & Other Orphans

by Fred W. Frailey

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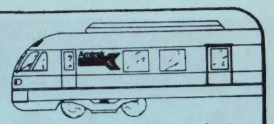
●● The First Five Years of Amtrak



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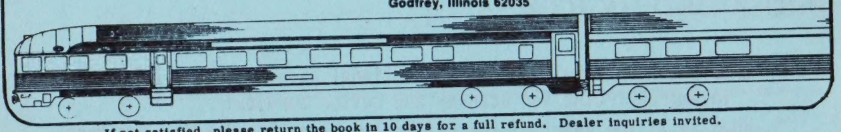

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RIDING THE ELECTRIC CAR ON THE NORTH STAR

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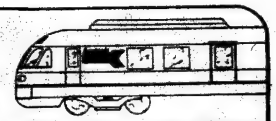

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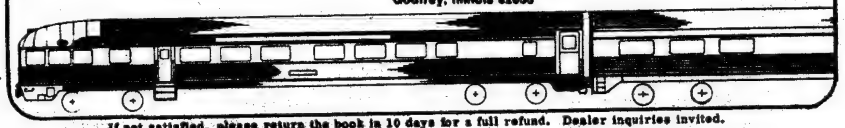

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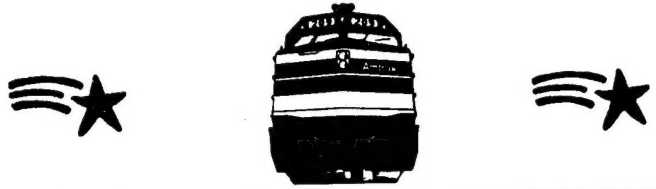
breakfast. We discover ourselves to be almost the only occupants of the sleeper as we roll thru the Minnesota countryside.

At Midway three separate groups of school children had boarded. We stroll thru the coaches and see that each kid is holding a Minnesota Highway Map (showing railroads), and most are diligently following the train's progress. One of the maps shows that we are nearing Hinckley. Our memory is jogged and we recall the old railroad story of the Great Hinckley Conflagration and rescue trains rushing thru burning trees as the wooden coaches begin to catch fire. So it's out on the back vestibule to watch as we pass thru town. Here is where the old NP crosses our ex-GN track. We note that the crossing is out and there is no connection



to the northern line. Ah, progress. No more TWIN PORTS-TWIN CITY EXPRESS. Hinckley is not a stop, but we do load and unload passengers at both Cambridge and Sandstone.

The NORTH STAR moves right along, and after a cup of coffee we glide over and across many sets of trackage (is that NP or Soo Line or what?) and arrive at Superior on time. Now we are in iron country and we see ore ships. Right after crossing the St. Louis River (at the nose of Lake Superior) we observe the drawbridge behind us slowly opening to admit a large vessel. A canting to the right, a jaunty mile next to a freeway and here we are in Duluth--arriving to the minute at 11:35am.

Number 10 will depart at 5:30pm but is scheduled to arrive at Midway AFTER the EMPIRE BUILDER leaves tonight. Since we have booked space on No. 7, we're forced to find other means of transportation. After inspecting the railway museum located right at trackside in The Depot, we walk up the hill and down a block to the abode of Greyhound. $8.05 gets us a ticket to Minneapolis, as opposed to $10.50 by train. The bus is a new MCI-8, yet it is crowded; and what with those tiny, cramped seats it's pure misery. Greyhound would be smart to experiment with 2 and 1 seating.

Needless to say, we are happy to leave the bus at Minneapolis. Now, how to get to Midway? Not too hard, really. One takes a city bus down Hennepin Avenue--right past the old railway station--a turn onto University and a transfer to #16A gets us to within three blocks of Amtrak.

The new station is quite a beauty. High ceilings, plush carpet, more seating space than Penn Station in New York. There is room outside for an extra platform track and another storage track. Soft music plays inside, and there are ample machines for snacks, but no restaurant. The luggage carts clank and clatter over the tile in uncarpeted sections. But, some drawbacks: only two telephones available, and they are enclosed in a "baffle" that throws one's private conversations out into the waiting room for all to hear. And like all of Amtrak's newly-built stations, it's in the middle of nowhere. At least there is some kind of bus service here. Finally, behind the neat, new and pleasant-looking modern ticket area, we encountered a nasty employee. As things change, they also remain the same.

As salt in our wounds, No. 7 is 20 minutes late and is still in the station when the NORTH STAR arrives from Duluth. We could have avoided that awful bus ride. But one never knows for sure.

RIDING THE EDMONTON LRT

by Tom Schwarzkopf

As I entered Edmonton's new downtown LRT station I found it hard not to compare it to subways I had ridden in Paris, London, Toronto and Montreal--for the most part dull, noisy and dirty. Publicity has touted the Light Rail Transit system as different, but here I was descending the stairs a la London to a ticket hall. To be sure the decor is bright and airy. Red tile floors and buff rough stucco walls where shops will soon be. Displays of human and natural history in the shop windows made them less empty. Thru the temporary turnstiles I passed (the permanent ones are still on order) and admiring the planters of green plants ringing the opening, I rode the escalator to the crowded platform level. Again red tile flooring rising in benches along the center. Obviously those benches, being an integral part of the floor and tile-topped will stay intact for some time. The center platform puts the walls on the opposite side of the tracks, making graffiti disfigurement more difficult. Illuminated station and advertising signs break these walls.

I pushed thru the crowds to the platform edge. At my feet ran conventional railway track, wood ties with an odourless preservative and ballast. Then I raised my eyes. In an arch over the track ran a shiny copper contact wire and above it messenger wire. That was the jolt that brought me from London and elsewhere back to Edmonton.

This was different! Then the train glided in. I didn't hear it come until it drew up alongside. It was that quiet. The cars are white with a blue and yellow stripe along the bottom edge and blue safety stripes on the end. An illuminated button reading "Push to Open Doors" is beside each door. I push and the door slides open with a slight swish and click. Noting the Faively pantograph folded down close to the roof due to low overhead in the tunnel, I entered the car.

Another pleasant surprise. Bright, striped fabric seats in facing pairs and floor carpet complete the interior. Ample substantial stanchions rise from each seat back and between each double door set except for the center set. This door is marked for wheelchair entry. On the door stanchions are more "Press to Open" signs. They light up when the doors are released on the loading side. Why passenger-actuated doors? Only 2 of the 5 stations are below ground, and here in the north it reaches 40 below--Fahrenheit or Celsius it doesn't matter. The driver in his compact, full-width compartment closes the doors and we accelerate smoothly out of the station. Silently. Again and again on this trip I am struck by how quiet the cars are inside and out. No click of wheels. No whine of rubber tires. One can just hear the controller stepping up.

We roll past strange walls of petrified tree trunk formations--cast-in-place concrete piles irregular in surface from the earth that shaped them. The tunnel is well-lit. We stop at Churchill Station, a dead ringer but for the signs for the Central Station we just left. I notice the closed-circuit TV cameras in the ceiling and the public address speakers. Just off the platform area in a walkway going to the surface is the main central room. One wall is a bank of closed-circuit TV monitors. On another wall is the mimic board for the block controls for the system. The radio dispatchers sit behind the glass wall that separates the room from the hallway, quietly moving the trains and connecting buses along.

Back on the train --and that seems to be the name the car sets have been given by Edmontonians--we climb the grade out of the tunnel past a sudden burst of light, illumination for the cameras guarding the tunnel entrance. We cross a street at grade and on to the surface stations. Stadium, next to the Commonwealth Games facility of the same name, and Coliseum next to its namesake are center-platform affairs enclosed from the elements by arched roofs and glazed walls along the tracks. Ramps and elevators are installed for the handicapped, as are elevators in the two underground stations.

We speed by the shops, once housing streetcars, then motor and trolley buses and now the new breed of streetcar. The shops lie between these two stations. On again we glide, down into a short tunnel passing under the CN's main freight yards. We have been paralleling the CN's passenger tracks since we surfaced, and if one's timing is right you can get a classic picture of the LRT and the SUPER CONTINENTAL passing.

The train slows, crosses over a switch and on single track crosses the last level crossing and stops at its northern terminus, Belvedere Station. The trip has taken just over 12 minutes for 5 1/2 miles, slightly over the advertised. Belvedere is a small concrete platform with corrugated steel siding, but this area is noted for things happening in the night to fixed objects. An unfinished but ample (400 free stalls) parking lot lies cross corner from the station. Temporary bus transfer facilities are there too, but a permanent bus zone is under construction.

The driver (motorman?) walks from one end of the train to the other. He activates a switch box that will lower the crossing gates when they arrive and are installed, and waits for its electronic message to clear the block signal. Then the doors close, he checks his controls and the train glides off.

I shake my head to make sure I am still in Edmonton. Yes, there is an odour from the stockyard neighbour of the station reminding me I'm still in the West.

Has it all been so dreamlike smooth and quiet? No, but for a new system it has been remarkably troublefree. The week before the official opening on Apr 23 the system ran for three free-ride days. Overcrowding, operator unfamiliarity and a few equipment malfunctions thoroughly ruined any pretense to a schedule. However, Edmonton Transit were wise. The rubber neckers got it out of their systems, the operators worked under peak-load conditions, and no one can complain too loudly about gremlins when the ride is free.

The two main problems so far have been the doors and the speed controls. People play with the buttons or block the electric eyes on the door and an occasional one will close but indicate "open". However, these are being quickly ironed out. The speed check devices occasionally trip when a train slightly below the maximum speed passes. Operators have as a result been going cautiously, resulting in slightly longer times. This also will be fixed in due course.

Several other minor quirks have arisen, mostly due to cost-saving in the designs. The one block per station concept has on occasion delayed southbound trains entering Central Station because of northbound trains holding the block further up the line. The single track at Belvedere restricts movements at that end also, and some trouble was experienced with the switch motor.

Ridership is above expectation and the Saturday passenger count very high. It's now as fast to go downtown from nearby suburbs as to go to the suburban shopping plaza. The secret is in connecting buses. After a 2-week break-in and fine tuning, my secretary has reduced her travel time from one hour in pre-LRT days to 35 minutes. Others find the time the same but the trip more pleasant. Obviously passenger patterns will take some time to stabilize, but for now the system seems to be handling it well.

What is ahead? The IX Commonwealth Games in August will tax the system, but officials are confident it will carry the crowds. After that comes winter, this time under operating conditions. How will it respond then? I predict just fine, thank you. Proven technology, conventional track and tried and true Du Wag/Siemens rolling stock make this project a sure success. Add to that the fact that the job came in on time 95% complete and UNDER-budget, and Edmonton has a sure winner on its hands. The planning budget has been approved for Phase II. I'm just waiting for Phase III or IV to bridge the 12 or so miles to my "bedroom suburb". Till then I just might detour to Northeast Edmonton and take the train.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

ALAN S. BOYD is now President of Amtrak (as of Jun 1) and this is our first issue during his presidency. We show you his picture (below, left), reproduced from Amtrak News. The outgoing Paul Reistrup said (in Amtrak News) "I worked for Alan Boyd for six years and feel confident that the transition will be smooth and that he will rely on the experience and judgment of the staff as Amtrak moves forward into its next era. I would suggest that all Amtrak employees just keep on working, doing a good job every day. You won't see much of a change in operations or organization. Just take care of the passengers because that's what we're all about. Remember to keep customer-oriented because they are the ones who buy the tickets and support us with their taxes." Both Boyd and Reistrup previously worked for the Illinois Central Gulf RR. Incidentally, Amtrak News, the employee newsletter, is now published monthly instead of twice monthly as an economy measure..... THE FULL HOUSE of Representatives is scheduled to vote on the Amtrak funding bill Jun 16. This is the bill authored by Harley Staggers, which gives Amtrak more money than does the Senate bill of Sen. Long's, already passed.....

Alan S. Boyd

PROPOSED OVERNIGHT TRAIN between Sacramento and San Diego CA is being held up while the contract is drawn up and sent to the National Arbitration Panel for a decision. Amtrak and the SP were unable to reach an agreement on running the train without the panel's intervention.....

"ERNEST M. FRIMBO" tells his own story of reaching the 2,500,000-mile mark in rail travel in the Jun 5 New Yorker (see RTN, last issue). And a person calling himself "T. E. M. Hiss-Whitaker", whom we presume to be the same New Yorker editor, reviews a railroad book in the Jun 4 New York Times Book Review. The book is "The American Railroad Passenger Car" by John H. White Jr. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 699 pp., $39.95 thru Jul 31, $45 thereafter). The review ends in a typical activist Frimbo fashion by urging the reader to call Amtrak and ask to rent its private car 10,000. The New Yorker's May 22 issue carries a cartoon by Warren Miller showing an Amtrak train with an ancient dining car labelled "Waldo's Diner--Eats"..... SOME UNEXPECTED FORCES are urging the Amtrak San Francisco-Chicago run to go via the Rio Grande as those who drew up the original Amtrak system map intended. The DOT's scenarios D and E (see last issue, p. 13) both show the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR operating on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR route. The DOT does not explain why in the "Modified Current System" map it went out of its way to re-route the train on that more scenic line. And Caltrans is brewing a plan whereby, if the "Recommended Route Structure" is adopted, it would get together with Nevada and Utah and try to develop a 403-B train from Oakland to Salt Lake City, using some WP trackage, to tie in with the Rio Grande to Denver. Warns another rail supporter, "If the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR goes, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR won't be far behind".....

AMTRAK TRAIN 412, the New Haven-Springfield RDC, had a fire in the lead unit of the 2-car train the night of May 26 near Enfield CT. Passengers and crew escaped, but RDC #32 was gutted by fire before firemen could douse the flames. Passengers continued on on train 142, the BANKERS. On May 31, 6 miles south of San Clemente, the driver of a truck and trailer rig fell asleep and ended up with his rig on the Santa Fe tracks. A northbound SAN DIEGAN, pulled by engine 512, struck the vehicle. The truck driver had some fractures, but they may have been caused by his initial crash thru a fence and onto the rails. A second person in the truck escaped unhurt. No other injuries were reported. The train was doing 90mph but was able to slow for a quarter mile before the impact.....

* * *

NEW INTERMODAL AGREEMENT between Amtrak and Transport of New Jersey, announced Jun 9, allows riders to purchase one thru ticket to Atlantic City NJ. Tickets are available from any Amtrak agent, the corporation said. Seven buses leave daily from Philadelphia's 30th St. Station between 9:35am and 7:45pm for an hour and a quarter trip to Atlantic City. Seven return buses run from Atlantic City between 8am and 9:40pm. One-way adult fare is $3.45, $6.60 roundtrip.....

THE SAN DIEGANS showed a 17% ridership increase between May 1977 and May 1978, Amtrak's Southwest District reported Jun 12--from 75,476 to 88,826 riders.....

THE CHESSIE SYSTEM on Jul 4 will open the famous First Stone of the B&O, at the B&O Railroad Museum, 150 years after it was sealed. The First Stone was set in place on Independence Day in 1828 at Baltimore to commemorate the start of construction on America's first railroad. The symbolic marble Stone contains a time capsule which will be opened in brief private ceremonies Jul 4. At that time another time capsule will be placed within the stone, containing the microfilmed letters and telegrams of the nation's railfans, provided officials receive the letters at the museum by Jun 26. The First Stone will be reopened next in 50 years. Send your messages for microfilming to: 1978 Capsule, B&O RR Museum, 901 W. Pratt St., Baltimore MD 21223..... THE CHESSIE SYSTEM also announced on May 18 its summer passenger and auto schedule for its Lake Michigan trainferries. From May 28 to Sep 4 inclusive two trainferries (3 starting Aug 1) will cross the Lake providing service between Ludington MI and the Wisconsin ports of Milwaukee, Manitowoc and Kewaunee. Schedules differ for each day of the week. Check with Chessie System, Terminal Tower, Cleveland OH 44101 (216-623-2400.....

Chessie System

* * *

AN INCREDIBLE STORY of pre-wrapped sandwiches has come out of Amtrak. Amtrak disposed of 96,000 sandwiches, losing $76,800 in the process, because a Chicago TV station charged that the nitrogen-packing process at the time they are made might possibly permit botulism organisms to contaminate the sandwiches. WBBM-TV, channel 2 in Chicago on May 31 made the charge that the sandwiches, purchased by Amtrak from Cowboy Kitchens of Dallas, were unsafe. The station called the process, in which air is pumped from the wrapper and nitrogen pumped in as a preservative, "an Amtrak idea" and concluded its broadcast with the statement "Here's hoping that Amtrak won't lose some lives." Amtrak said it was "appalled" by the unfair charges made, and "for the first time in our 7-year history we asked for a retraction and an apology", pointing out that the sandwiches were tested in 4 independent lab tests and found to be safe. Amtrak said the maker has sold millions of the nitrogen-packed sandwiches over 3 years to over 100 customers (such as grocery chains and convenience food stores) with no problems. Amtrak could locate no experts who would find fault with the safety of the sandwiches, tho the TV station claimed that experts all over the country fear the consequences of the nitrogen-packed food (plastic-sealed lunch meats in markets are packed this way). The station refused a retraction, so Amtrak warned them to be careful of their sources, and went on the air in Chicago and to the Washington Star and said that the TV station was offering "sleazy yellow journalism" to the public. The result

to the traveling public is that Amtrak's new line of sandwiches listed on menus of lounges and non-conventional trains won't be found. Conventionally-wrapped sandwiches will be substituted, thus limiting the variety available. Amtrak called the incident an example of how Amtrak can't do things that other corporations do. "Amtrak gets slapped in the face for doing normal, routine things that others can do." Altho there is no evidence that the sandwiches are unsafe, Amtrak dropped them immediately because the "public's perception" is that they are unsafe--the story was picked up national wire services.....

THREE STATION DEDICATIONS are coming up: dedications of new buildings in Miami (Jun 20), Canton OH (Jun 30) and Rochester NY (Jul 12)..... LONG ISLAND RESIDENTS, in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, NY, will be able to telephone a local number for Amtrak information--981-9100--starting Jun 12..... THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Transportation's own hearings on state trains affected by the DOT proposal are coming up in July (see last issue, p. 3). The San Francisco hearing will be at 350 McAllister. All hearings run from 9:30am to 4:30pm. If unable to attend, California residents can write their comments to: Division of Mass Transportation, PO Box 1499, Sacramento CA 95807. They can request an extract of the DOT report on Amtrak routes and a copy of the Caltrans Program of Intercity Rail Service, now in press..... THE EL CAMINO, the county-supported SAN DIEGAN run, is apparently threatened by the cutback in property taxes created by the Jarvis-Gann Initiative passage (see p. 6). If funds from Los Angeles County dry up, Caltrans has the options of requesting Amtrak to make it a 403-B run, or giving it 100% state financing. If the state takes over the funding, it will request an earlier San Diego departure time to improve ridership. Meanwhile, not all state legislators are happy with Caltrans head Adriana Gianturco's de-emphasis on highways. State Senator Alfred Alquist of San Jose attempted to cut her salary from the state budget since our last issue appeared. Governor Brown is up for re-election next fall, and a defeat would likely see a turn-around in the direction that Caltrans has been taking..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED will get its track rebuilding between Post Road and Rensselaer NY. Amtrak's Board on May 31 gave the go-ahead to the project for which Congress had earmarked $4.1 million. The train was recently given permanent status by the DOT. Amtrak said that the train's time would be 32 minutes faster after the work is done, possibly as early as mid-1979. Penn Central abandoned the 12.6-mile missing link in 1972 and removed the track..... SOME SPEED RESTRICTIONS on Amtrak's Washington-Boston mainline and the Philadelphia-Harrisburg and Springfield-New Haven branch lines will be removed when Amtrak finishes some track improvements--replacement of ties and surfacing, which are beginning now. Amtrak's Board approved spending $4.9 million for the work at its May 31 meeting. These improvements are not part of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project.....

ANNUAL BOY SCOUT Pilgrimage at Galena IL Apr 28-30 had over 3000 scouts touring an Amcoach from the BLACK HAWK on a siding. The ICG objected at first on safety grounds but relented after Amtrak sales rep Dennis Hamilton and Doug Cobb of the N.W. Illinois RR Historical Society of Rockford made a major effort to get the railroad's cooperation. The two supporters handed out timetables and Amtrak hats..... A COLLEGE COURSE on the rails: starting Jun 13 Prof. (Ms.) Brett Williams of American University and 15 students were to make a 6540-mile railtrip on 21-day Railpasses, beginning with the SHENANDOAH from Washington to Cincinnati. Students will learn railroad history at various stops and will cover a good portion of the Amtrak system for college credit. Newsweek magazine may run coverage of the unique venture..... THE RAIL FANTRIP from Los Angeles to Bakersfield over the Tehachapis, listed in our 1st Apr issue, has been postponed until September. The L.A.-Grand Canyon trip was cancelled.....

HOURS OF SERVICE are now being posted in some dining cars on Amtrak trains. This apparently came at the urging of Caltrans. That agency asks riders to send them copies of any complaints they make to Amtrak on this matter.....

NEARLY $6 BILLION in Federal-aid highway and bridge construction contracts were awarded by State highway departments during calendar year 1977, the DOT said on Jun 8..... MEMORIAL DAY DERAILMENT of 24 freight cars on SP at Suisun-Fairfield (May 29) just after the southbound STARLIGHT passed tied up the line most of the day and caused the two SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYRS to be detoured via Stockton and Tracy CA. Passengers from Sacramento, Davis and Suisun-Fairfield were bused..... THE RIDERSHIP FIGURES published last issue (p. 17) do not add up to the totals given. This is because Amtrak made adjustments for the prior periods being compared, apparently to allow for the changeover in methods of obtaining or reporting the data. The Jan adjustment is -60,000; Feb is -1,000; Mar is +3,000..... BART WILL BEGIN Sunday service on Jul 2..... THE MARYLAND DOT added a train (engine & 4 coaches) to the Brunswick-Washington line of the B&O commuter service, the first addition in 4 years, on May 30. Also, one coach was added to B&O commuter trains 161 & 174 on the Baltimore-Washington line. The new train leaves Brunswick at 6am, reaching DC at 7:10am, with stops at Gaithersburg, Rockville, Kensington and Silver Spring. It lvs DC at 4:25pm and reaches Brunswick 5:35pm.... SEABOARD COAST LINE on May 18 broke off talks with Southern Pacific on a proposed affiliation of the two railroads. Business Week (Jun 5) reports that SCL may be after an FRA loan instead of a business merger..... THE "SILVER STREAK" train movie has been playing in Mexico under the title "El Expresso de Chicago"... THE SOUTHERN CRESCENT apparently collided with a lumber truck in Atlanta on May 27. Three crewmen in the engine were reported injured. No other details..... "ULTIMATE OF CONTRADICTIONS" in news stories is what reader Thomas Hoffman Jr. calls a Washington Post juxtaposition on May 9: on the same page that describes the DOT plan to cut back the Amtrak system 30% appears an article about a battle to stop construction of 14 urban Interstate highway projects, costing $6.5 billion. "The cost...does not seem to disturb DOT at all" notes Mr. Hoffman..... ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS voted last November to end its color-coding labeling of freight cars. Computer Identics Co., a small electronics company in Westwood MA that makes optical scanners to identify passing cars, is filing suit against SP and other defendants, charging they conspired to keep the system from working..... CONRAIL FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES are being investigated by the ICC and other government officials and legislators. The NY Times (Jun 10) reports that as many as 14,000 W-2 forms sent to company employees were found to be undeliverable. Conrail's budget appropriation was halted in Congress while the investigation proceeded..... THE COLLISION OF the MONTREALER and the Conrail commuter train on Jun 9 (see p. 4) has been tentatively blamed on a communications mixup..... ST. LOUIS UNION Station owners are suing Amtrak for $655,976 in a dispute over rental of the station and other expenses..... A STUCK BRIDGE over the south branch of the Chicago River delayed Amtrak and Conrail trains for as much as 4 hours on May 28. A defect in the bridge's brake release mechanism kept it open between 12:45 & 3pm and between 4:20 & 8:29pm..... THE AMTRAK FUNDING bill now before the House contains a clause that forbids Amtrak from buying equipment from foreign countries unless it is not available in the U.S. The clause was inserted by Congresswoman Barbara A. Mikulski of Baltimore..... GG-1 NO. 4935, having suffered a fire on May 2, is back in service.....

Mailing date of this issue: June 15, 1978.

SPV-2000 (continued from page 8)

noise was still there. It had been reduced from the initial 92 decibel level to 78 and would be reduced even more. Another part of the problem was the faulty motor mount placement and muffler location, all of which would get a going over next time at Budd.

The passengers liked the car and so did the operating crews, but the B&M probably won't buy any. The MBTA is going for as much of a push-pull operation as it can economically fit into its service patterns. Only some off-peak trains will continue with self-propelled cars, and most likely it will be with rebuilt RDCs.

EXPRESS ADS

RTN READERS: SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDLY ADVERTISERS! Courteous, competent help in securing the best available accommodations on Amtrak, CN, CP, Princess Patricia, etc. Write GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. Pay by check or credit card--we make it easy!

MEXICO RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--October 8-21, 1978--"Trip of a Thousand Wonders (4.1% grades)" & Copper Canyon (open gondola). Private cars SOONERLAND & MISTLETOE plus Mexican sleeping cars. Mexico City Metro subway, shops, streetcars and SAHAGUN car factory. Guadalajara subway and shops. Ride on locomotive. Trip starts in Oklahoma (join anywhere). For full details and map, write: Howard Thornton, Midwest Travel Service, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City OK 73110

Summer West Coast Rail Sale. $75.00 roundtrip San Francisco to Seattle/Vancouver. $134.00 from Los Angeles. Other summer excursions including the NEW USA RAIL PASS family plan. Details from the rail specialists, Let's Travel Tours, 3780 Elizabeth Street, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 787-8350.

INDEPENDENCE LIMITED V will operate Lexington KY to Greensboro NC via Asheville on July 1-3 with Southern 2-10-4 #610 & open-window cars plus limited extra fare observation lounge serv. avail. RNRH, Box 13222, Roanoke VA 24032, 703-366-5211 eves.

Denver CO July 8-9: Mile High RAILFAIR '78. Jefferson Co. Fairgrounds, 15200 W. 6th Ave. Over 60 exhibitors incl. Amtrak, Railroads, Publishers, Authors, Models, Artists, Railroadiana Dealers, Hobby Shops, Collectors, NARP, Operating Layouts & more. MOVIES - PHOTO CONTEST - DOOR PRIZES, incl. tickets for Rio Grande Zephyr to Glenwood Springs CO, provided by Porreca Slides. Hours: Sat. 10am-7pm; Sun. 10am-4pm. Donation: $1.00 adults, 75¢ sr. citizens, 50¢ children under 12. Come to the "Premier" Railroad Show in America. For info, send large SAE to: NRHS, P. O. Box 5181, Denver CO 80217.

TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

EMPLOYEE TIMETABLES FOR SALE - New 8-page list of 1000 ranging from 1892 to 1978--from the ALTON to the PENN CENTRAL--from the EAST JORDAN and SOUTHERN to the YOUNGSTOWN & SUBURBAN. List free for SSAE. Carl Loucks, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal, Pullman items from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. See us at Mile High RAILFAIR '78, Golden, Colo. July 8 & 9. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy large or small railroad collections. Also trade.

BUYING PUBLIC TIMETABLES before 1950. Large, small lots. Send details, price wanted, SSAE for quick reply. CLOVER, 140 Sabal Dr, Ft. Myers Beach FL 33931.

WANTED HOUSTON RAILFANS. Would like to be contacted by railfans or club in Houston, TX area. Call Erl Benson, 371-9812 after 8 P.M.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $1.25 per square inch. Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 14: Boston-Chatham NY. Fall foliage in Westfield River Gorge, Berkshire Hills, State Line Tunnel. Fares (before 9/18) adults $29.95, under 12 $17.95. Mass. Bay Railroad Enthusiasts, Box 136-N, Ward Hill MA 01830.

Jul 22, 23, 29, 30: SR steam loco 610 trips Alexandria-Charlottesville VA. Adult $19, 5-11 $17, under 5 free. Piedmont Ltd, PO Box 456, Laurel MD 20810.

Jun 23-25: L.A.-Las Vegas excursion, hi-levels & private cars. 2 nights deluxe motel. $140; parlor $160; roomette $165. Lv L.A. 6:30pm, ar L.V. 1am. Rio Vista Railways, Box 19992, Los Angeles 90019. (213) 299-7523 or 935-6783.